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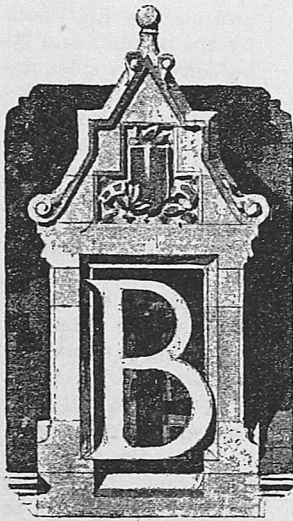
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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## THE MODERN HOUSE—ITS DECORATION AND FURNITURE.—I.

BY A. SANDIER.

Translated from the *Revue Illustrée*.



has no more secret for us than the modern small domino-boxes, the fresh plastering of which the wind of the Seine or Marne dries in spring-time. And not only has Horace made us his poetic revelations, but from the century of Augustus up to the present, hundreds of commentators, grammarians, epigrammatists, scientists, and architects have reconstructed, for our delectation, piece by piece, the interior of the habitation of an amiable *bourgeois* literary man, which he owned, a little more than nineteen centuries before the present era.

Quite large is the number of works which treat of architecture according to *style*, which is still with face turned toward the past, and endeavors, frequently in vain, to, *volens volens*, adapt for the present epoch the furniture and decoration of the Mediæval Age, of the Renaissance, of Louis XIV, Louis XV, Louis XVI. This school which has produced marvelous works of science and intelligence, has unhappily vulgarized a senseless arabic taste intended to open the interiors of our houses by a *basque* mixture of all styles, and in their productions to the shoddy imitations, to the shabby-genteel, to the trickiness and expedient of fraud. It is in virtue of the spirit of fatal imitation that the interior of our houses, where light is required for work, are darkened by the introduction of window-panes; that our small hearths are encumbered with large andirons of forged iron, calculated for the large caverns of the feudal chimneys; that our chairs, in place of accommodating with their curves the supple graces of the present woman clad in her lightly-folded garments, affect the rigid forms of the high cathedrals of the Mediæval Age, and make of a *Parisienne* of this modern age a *Blanche* of Castile in spite of herself—a high-born dame in penitence.

I pass on, after having made these few explanatory remarks on the furniture and decoration to be found in the interiors of our houses, even the most modern, having simply designed to demonstrate the very simple truth, to wit, that the furniture and ornamentation of a house are not matters of passing whims;

Y means of numerous writings on the subject we learn how the interiors of houses were furnished and decorated by all nations and in all epochs. We know, for instance, as if we had built it, the dimension and disposition of the house of Socrates, which, tradition has it, was so small, and yet so large for the number of his true friends, as the philosopher maliciously remarked. The handsome villa which Horace owed to

the liberality of Mæcenas,

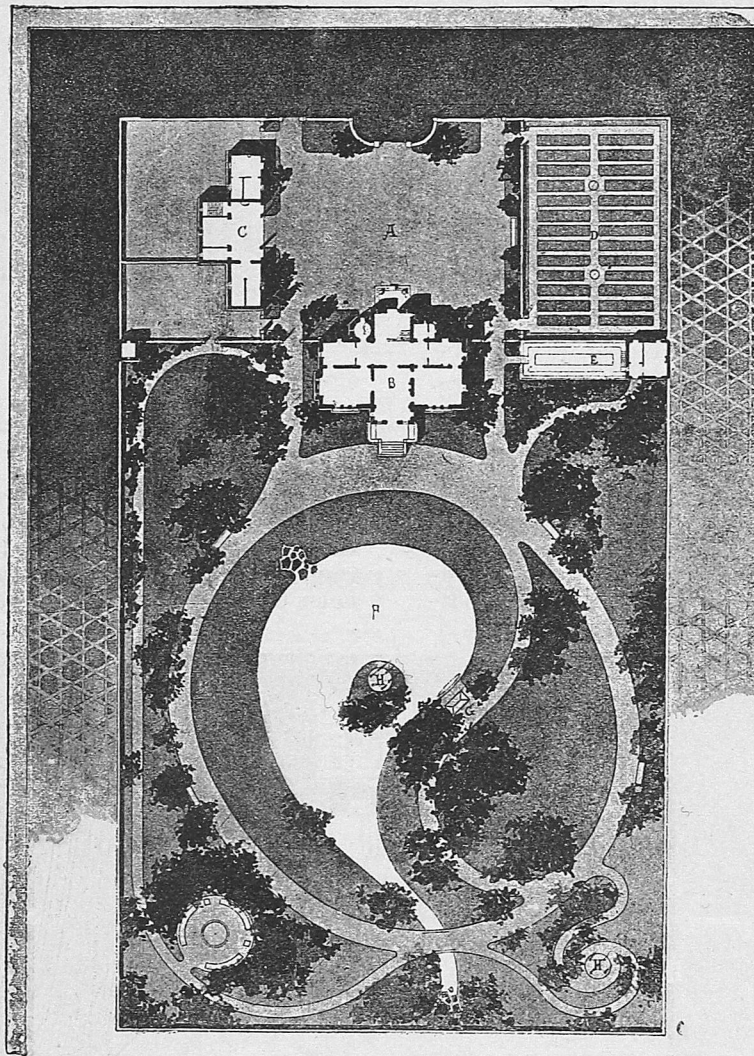


FIG. 1.—GENERAL PLAN OF HOUSE AND GROUNDS.

that it is not possible for any length of time to sacrifice to the delectation of the eye alone all the necessities required for the working man and his comforts. The house with its arrangements are the shell of the human animal. They must adapt themselves to his needs and habits, and not impose on him an archaeological caprice. The history of architecture and furniture shows that each epoch has had its proper determinate style, for which there was a reason, not instigated solely by a desire for change; this fact is demonstrated by the forms and disposition of the houses themselves, by the exigencies of existence and activity of the different generations. At the present day we see the innovations in architecture, furniture, etc., introduced by the English, and particularly the Americans. The citizens of the United States, who are but a hundred years old as a people, are not trammelled by their history and their traditions. They are not childishly bound by the limitation of ancient plastic forms; their imagination is not haunted by ancient models; theirs is an entirely liberal spirit of accommodation only governed by the necessities of modern comfort and elegance.

It is time that we, in our turn, adopt the same practical and independent spirit in the arrangement of our interiors, that we perceive the actual necessities of our surroundings, and thus in a generation or two originate a new style.

It is this idea alone which has incited us to write the following study of the decoration and furniture of the house of to-day, being as they are the outcome of rational construction.

In the meanwhile, though endeavoring to deal with the new, we will have some reminiscences of the past, for it would be difficult not to recall it to mind, and if we pay most attention to the styles which have some animation, it is because we wish to show clearly the inconveniences which result from exclusive bondage to ancient forms. But it has never entered into our minds to deny their beauty since such forms have always found places in our interiors and have acted as inspirations for the developments of new motives.

The decoration of an interior is not an independent affair, but should be carried out in harmony with the architecture and richness of the house which it completes.

In order to give the present sketch a practical character, the first thing to be done is to determine the consequence of the house to be furnished and the sum that is to be allowed for that purpose.

Take for instance a French residence, which will cost \$20,000 to build, we should be given about the same amount for decorating and furnishing the interior.

This we would divide as follows:

Stairways and vestibule,	\$1,800
Drawing-room,	3,000
Dining-room,	2,200
Library,	2,000
Smoking-room,	1,200
Ladies' bedroom,	1,600
Gentleman's bedroom,	800
Boudoir,	1,800
Children's rooms and nursery,	1,000
Guest chamber,	600
Servants' rooms,	400
Pantry, toilet and bath-rooms,	1,000
Kitchen,	400
	<hr/>
Unforeseen expenses,	\$18,000
	2,000
	<hr/>
	\$20,000



# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

In addition, there will be an expense of \$8,000 or \$10,000 for stables, coach-house, lodge, and arrangement and decoration of the garden. The grand total for the building, decoration, etc., would thus aggregate \$50,000.

We give in Fig. 1 a representation of the general plan of the house and grounds. The plot of ground is 244 feet broad by 46 feet deep, which represents a little more than two and a quarter acres in superficial area. In the northern part of the plot is the court-yard, A, 95 by 125 feet, around which we group the residence, B, the out-houses with their court-yard, C, the kitchen, D, with the conservatory and gardener's house at E.

The remainder of the plot of ground is to be arranged as a garden in which we have laid out a little lake, F, a wharf or landing-place, G, the kiosks, HH, and several benches.

The two plans which follow, show the arrangement of the house. Fig. 2 is the plan of the ground floor. The glazed canopy, A, allows of alighting from a carriage under cover, and opens into the principal vestibule, C, which leads to all the apartments on this floor. The dressing-room, D, and water closet, *d*; the office, F, which can also be made to answer as a smoking-room; the library, or billiard-room, G; the drawing-room, H; the dining-room, K; the butler's pantry, L, and the servants' stairway, M, which leads from the basement to the garret. The entrance, I, places the drawing-room in direct communication with the garden.

Fig. 3 shows the plan of the first floor, which is reached by the stairway, A. The vestibule, B, opens into the bath-room, C, and water closet, *c*; the large bed-chamber, D, and its dressing-room, *d*; the boudoir, E, opening on the balcony, F; the chamber, G, with its dressing-room, *g*; the small chamber, H; the two closets, *h*, which may be used as store rooms, and finally the servants' stairway, M.

Fig. 4 is the elevation of the facade fronting on the court. We see here the canopy protecting the entrance door, above this the large window which lights the main stairway; to the right, the small octagonal tower, which encloses the servants' staircase, and to the left, the rectangular tower, in which are found the dressing-rooms, bath-rooms, etc.

As this facade looks toward the north it has but few openings, whereas the other front (Fig. 5), commands a view of the garden. has a southern exposure, and, having the sunlight, is pierced by many large windows, and all the principal chambers open upon it. On the ground floor, the south front of the

building is formed by the drawing-room and the entrance thereto, and on the first floor by the boudoir and its balcony. The sides are formed by the dining-room and library on the ground floor, and by the chambers and their corner balconies on the first floor.

The dormer window on the second floor complete the facade, the roof and chimneys appearing in silhouette against the sky.

Fig. 6 is a cross section. On the ground floor to the left, are the steps descending to the garden, then, in order, the drawing-room, the vestibule and the canopy. On the first floor, are the boudoir and its balcony, the vestibule and stairway; on the second floor, the nursery and a chamber.

After the preliminary sketch of the plans, we will now enter the house and will examine in detail as to how each apartment can be arranged so as to serve its destined purpose. We will endeavor to employ the least possible number of technical expressions in order that the explanations may be accessible to all and prove of the greatest general utility.

(To be continued.)

MESSRS. W. & J. SLOANE'S UPHOLSTERY DEPARTMENT.

VISITORS to the upholstery department of the above well-known firm are greatly pleased with the facilities afforded them for the inspection of the wonderful variety of upholstery fabrics kept in stock.

The various makes of goods are arranged in prodigal abundance in every possible style that will exhibit the artistic merits of the fabrics, and there is also a room fitted up to show the effects of portières, painted tapestry, panels and painted draperies in artificial

light. Surrounding the door of the room in question are arranged draperies of ponceau silk velours. The moldings and trimmings of the doorway are covered with a Gobel green silk velour, and the general appearance of the doorway is extremely

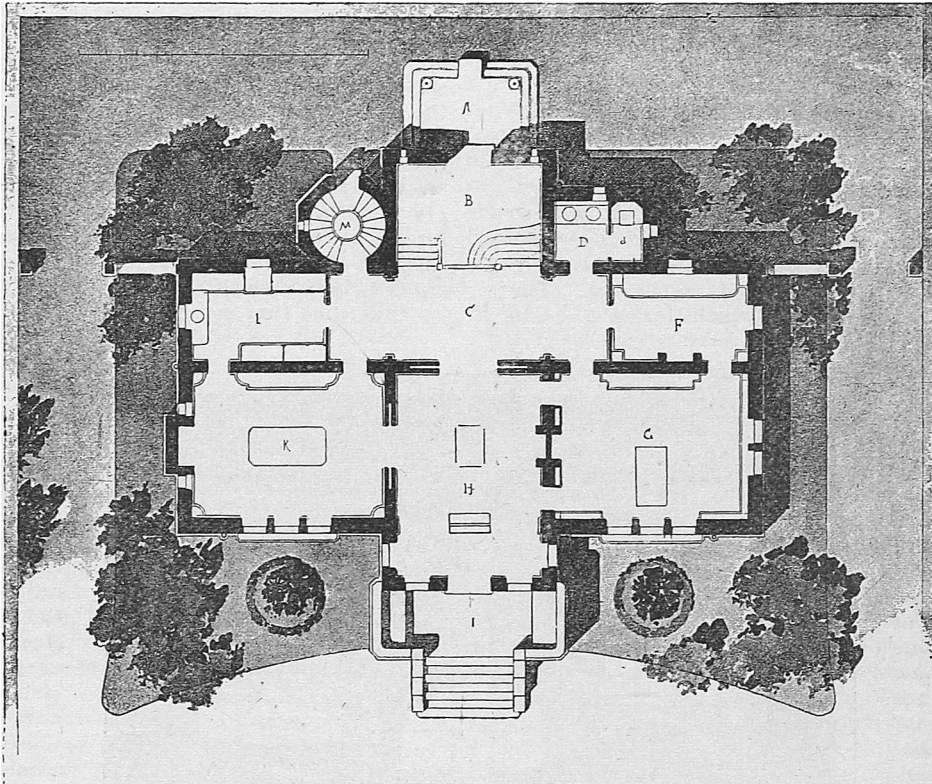


FIG. 2.—GROUND PLAN

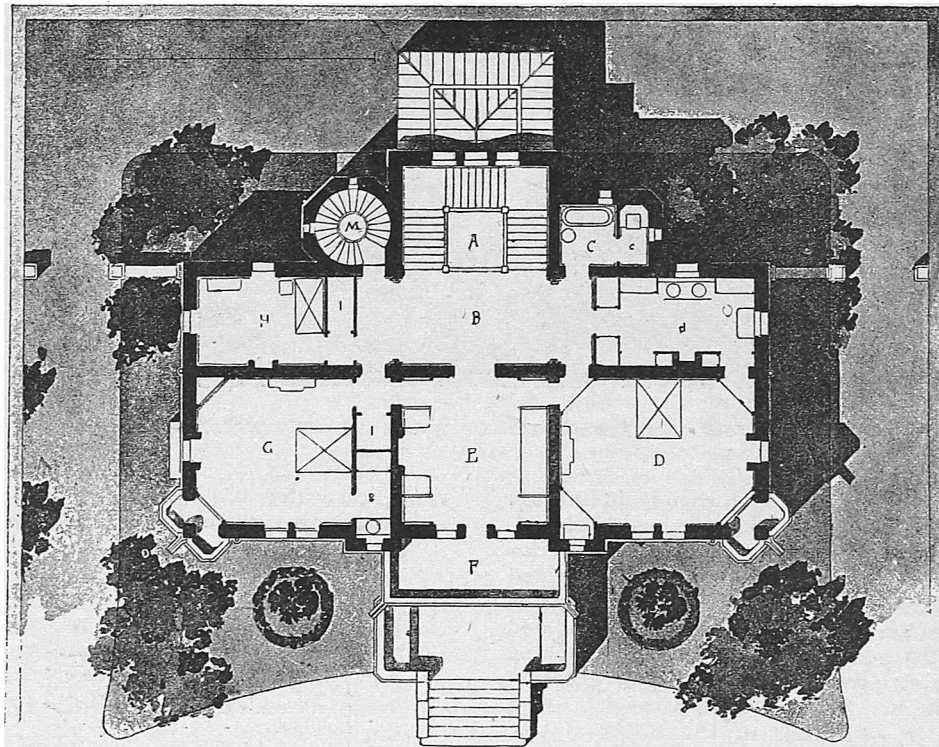


FIG. 3.—PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR.

artistic. Inside the apartment electric lights shed their radiance upon a scene of wonderful beauty. On two sides of the apartment are displayed panels of painted tapestry, surrounded by contrasting draperies, the *ensemble* being extremely attractive. On the remaining two sides are window draperies, which with lace curtains, give the effect of windows artistically treated by the deft fingers and skill of Messrs. W. & J. Sloane's accomplished artists.

Referring to the painted tapestry panels, we may say that one panel has for its subject a painting of "Cupid Wooing Psyche," the panel being surrounded by draperies of *blé d'or* velour. The second panel represents "Psyche Capturing Cupid," the draperies surrounding it being ashes of roses silk velour. The third panel is "The Apotheosis of Psyche and Love," the draperies surrounding it being of absinthe velour. Another panel represents "Morning," a beautiful female figure floating over the earth, sipping dew from the chalice of a white lily. The hangings surrounding this are in a *crème d'or* and gold damask of wonderful beauty. It may be said that all these paintings are reproductions of originals by Bougereau. The colors used are dyes, rather than oil colors, the painting being quite flat, and the flesh tones exceedingly soft and delicate.

There are two painted tapestry panels, the subject of one representing a scene in a wine cellar, and that of the other a Dutch kitchen. These are companion pieces, being treated in exactly the same tones of color, the style being somewhat dark and weird in effect. They are artistically draped with iridescent silk of a green bronze hue, which emphasizes or throws out the panels in a striking manner. There is much more

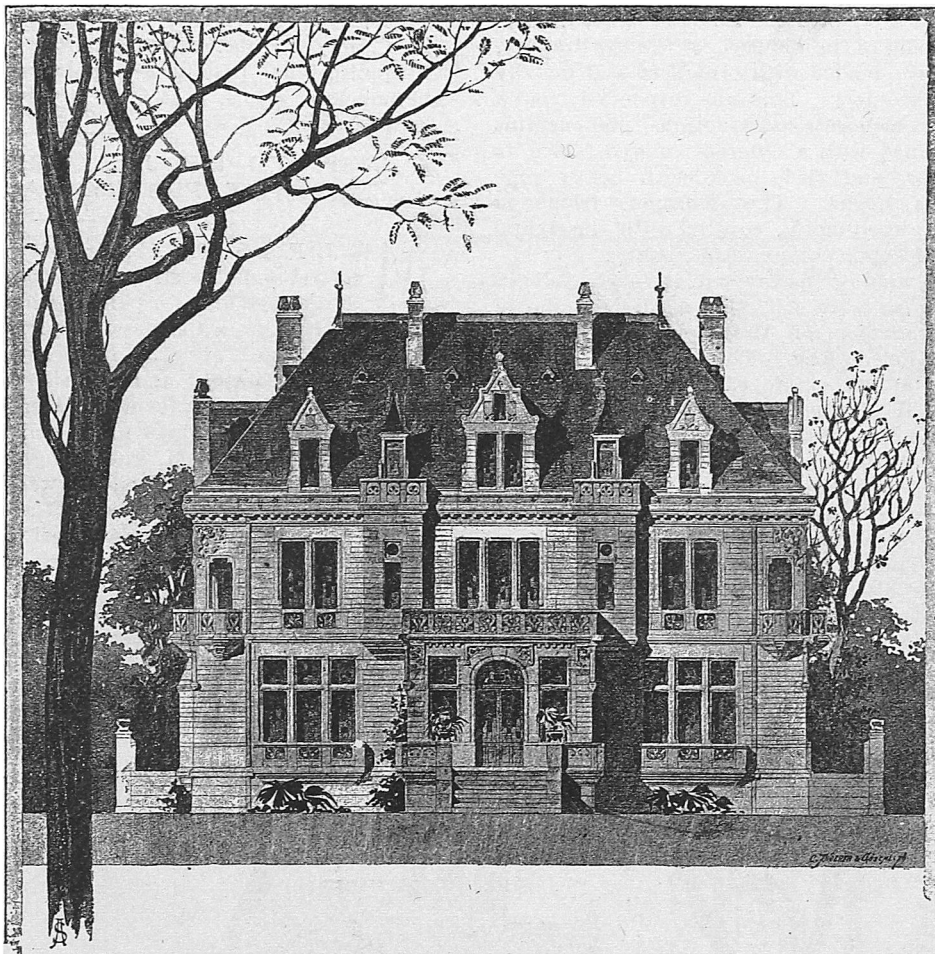


FIG. 4.—VIEW OF HOUSE FROM THE GARDEN.

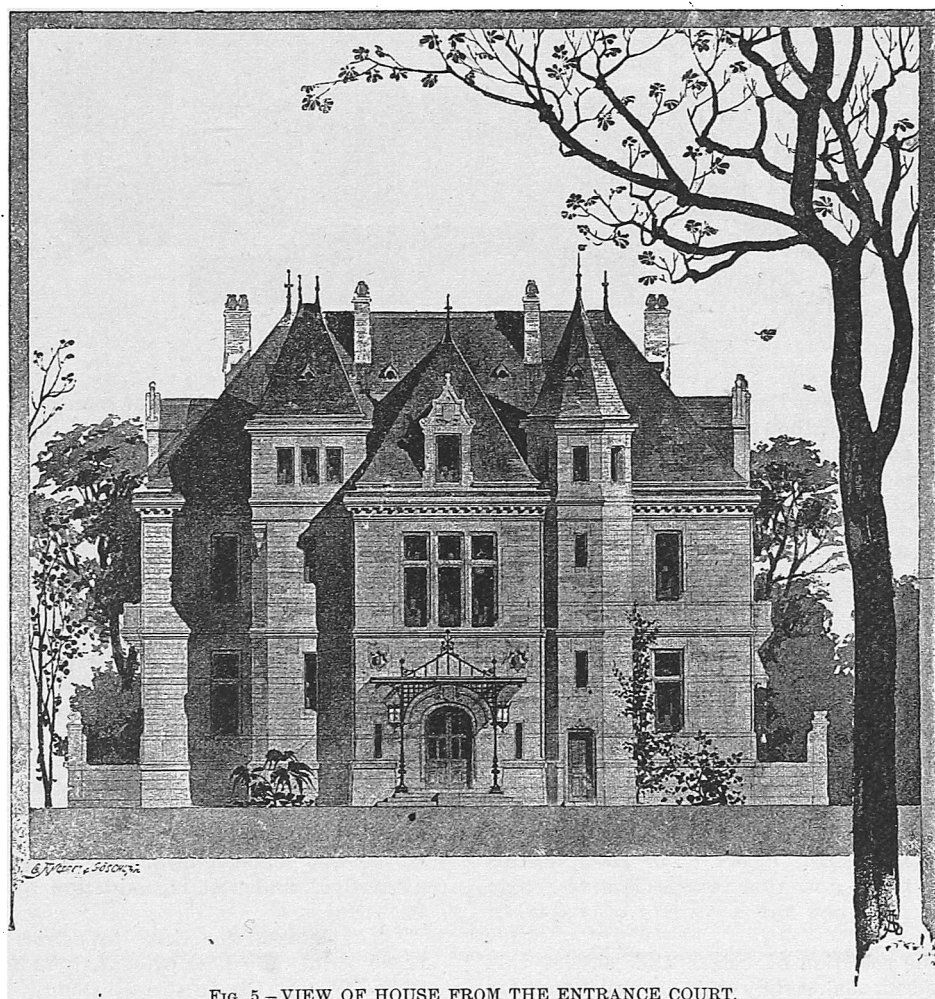


FIG. 5.—VIEW OF HOUSE FROM THE ENTRANCE COURT.

art in artistically draping a panel or draping a doorway than appears to the ordinary observer. The tones of the carpet and walls have to be paralleled, or matched to produce satisfactory results. In the case of a dull panel painting, the draperies require to be still duller in tone to throw out the panel, whose effects would be entirely lost with light drapery.

There is a beautiful pair of velour portières in Walter's gold, a neutral golden tint adopted by upholsterer Walter, of London. These portières are embroidered in gold, oxydized silver, copper and brass, this being the latest style of embroidery. Silk thread embroidery has completely died out, and metallic decorations are all the rage at present.

The models of window drapery are conspicuous from the total absence of lambrequins and cornices, such as have been in vogue for many years past. The present fashion is entirely in favor of light, natural, simple drapery. The death blow to the lambrequin was first given by Sarah Bernhardt, who adopted the system of arranging a long piece of soft drapery in delicate folds round the curtain pole, after the Oriental style, without any cutting, and with but little trimming.

A window is treated with a magnificent piece of Dracaena green satin damask with a yellowish figure thereon. Underneath the green damask is another satin damask in yellow and mode, the latter being the new name given to the color known as ashes of roses. The yellow drapery harmonizes with the yellow figure in the green drapery, and softens the transition between the white lace curtain and the green damask. Another fine pair of portières are of what is known as sixteenth century velour, that is a short, compact nap, like a fine velvet. The appliqué embroidery is done in silk and



metal effects, the work being afterwards painted and shaded. The present fashion is a great relief to the old style of window drapery, with its immense lambrequin, loaded with ornament and heavily weighed with appliqué embroidery. This was suspended from a gigantic cornice of the most elaborate construction. The curtains were also double, being lined with a different colored fabric to that of the curtain proper, and tied back with heavy rope loops to extremely large hooks. The enormous fringe to the curtains was made of wood-molds, covered with tinsel, and everything was extremely formal, pompous and heavy.

The present style of window decoration is portrayed in every variety of form in a large collection of designs shown by Mr. C. J. Vieau, manager of the upholstery department of the above mentioned firm. These designs are the work of the upholstery artists employed by the firm, who are capable of turning out the most exquisite ideas in the drapery and ornamentation of windows in harmony with the present style. The idea is to convey the impression of one long piece of soft drapery festooned and puffed into a variety of graceful combinations, one end of which frequently terminates in a magnificent *jabot*, or series of flutings that extend all the way down to the floor. This is known as French drapery, an example of which is also shown by Messrs. W. & J. Sloane in Walter's, or neutral, gold satin damask. Underneath this outer curtain is another curtain of a soft gray blue satin damask, which, together with the lace curtain, make a trinity of beautiful fabrics most delightful to the eye.

The prevailing style in decorating interiors is to have a harmony of self-tones of a given color in each apartment. The firm has lately draped a music room for a wealthy New York lady. The walls are in cream and gold, and white and gold satin was used upon the windows, in harmony therewith. The taste of the lady was so exacting that she had the electric wires covered with a winding of white silk, so as to have everything in harmony.

"We choose our curtain poles to harmonize in color with the metal furnishings of the room," said the manager, "You see in this case of samples, we have a great variety of colors in poles, by means of which we can complete the harmony of any style of decoration. Here is a pole in antique copper, while right above it is a steel blue pole. Next we have a Bower Barff, or ebony finish, above which is a sample of oxydized silver, then as you see, we have poles in bright silver, polished gold and white enamel. We can supply such patterns in any color, if necessary. Not only are the poles in keeping with the other appointments of the room, but chandeliers, door knobs, flower stands and fire dogs are also in harmony. Of course, in decorating a room of this kind, there is no objection to four or five different shades of yellow or cream, as the case may be, but there is a strong objection to the use of contrasting colors."

"Do you use more than one color in the materials with which you decorate your windows?"

"We always use two shades of a color. Where there are lace curtains, of course, the transition from cream or white lace to, for instance, a red wall, would be too abrupt, and they require to be clothed with silk curtains in a color that will harmonize with the wall. Window fabrics, as you see by these hangings, are now produced in the softest and most tender of pale colors. The term is 'Pompeian' colors. For example, this blue silk is a soft gray blue, and this orange is a very pale orange, and here we have pale pink and a variety of colors in soft, mellow effects.

There is no end to the selection of colors and shades this season. There is exhibited an elaborately embroidered panel for

a portière, which looks as if incrustated with jewels. It is a Turkish prayer robe, the prevailing tints of which are pink, turquoise blue, pale green, pale red and gold. All these are 'Pompeian' colors, that is to say, soft and tender shades.

## A VISIT TO MR. J. F. DOUTHITT'S SALON OF TAPESTRY PAINTINGS.

MR. J. F. DOUTHITT, proprietor of The American School of Art and Tapestry Co., at 286 Fifth Avenue, has one of the largest studios for painting in New York. He is himself an artist, and makes a business of keeping some thirty artists constantly employed at work in producing painted tapestries for high-class decorators and panels for ceilings, walls, screens, portières, and designs for art-stained glass.

Mr. Douthitt employs many eminent foreign artists, and, at the time of our visit, M. Paul Longpré, the greatest living flower painter, and Signor Boldini, the well-known figure painter, were busily at work executing works of art in their respective rôles.

There was standing on an easel a magnificent oil painting of roses and other flowers, the work of M. Longpré, which, as a painting, is beyond criticism. In every leaf and flower there are more than twenty tones of color, and the painting is a revelation to those who have never seen what the highest art can produce. There is a dewy atmosphere about the flowers, and

an ideal softness and splendor that is simply marvelous. Every petal, every leaf, every branch, is produced with photographic precision, but also with the superadded grace and sentiment that only the true artist can bestow.

M. Longpré has executed quite a number of floral panels for Mr. Douthitt, both in water and oil colors. On a pair of panels are represented bouquets of white and purple lilacs. There is also a beautiful water-color panel in which morning glories, ox-eyed daisies, and other American flowers stand in a polychromatic jar of Oriental porcelain. A panel of orchids is wonderfully beautiful. What surprises one most of all is the admirable technique of the artist. Every petal of a flower is the result of minute, extreme and laborious art, and the character of these plant studies is far above

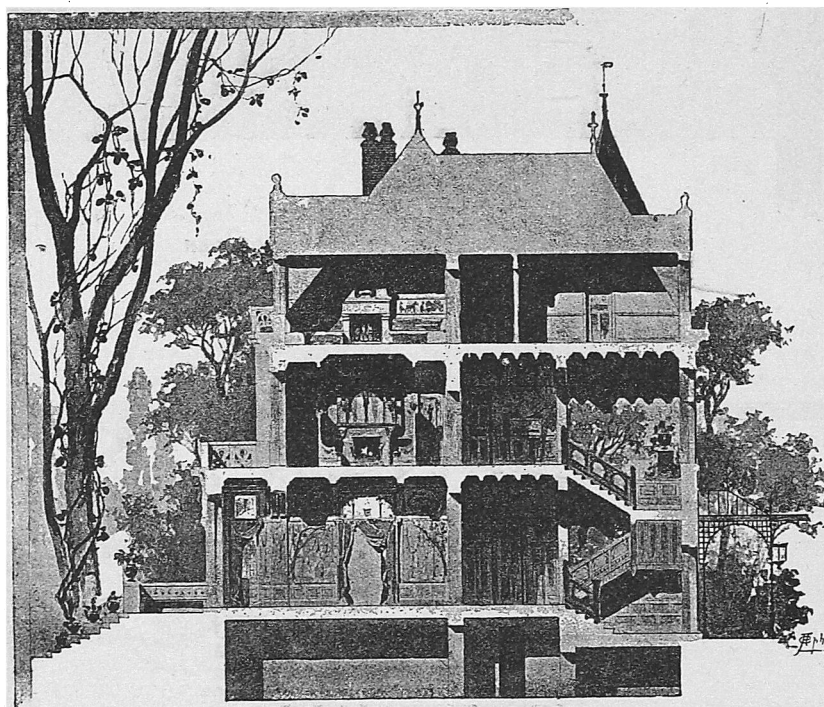


FIG. 6.—HALF SECTION OF HOUSE.

anything we have ever yet seen of the same kind.

Signor Boldini was at work upon a pair of flying cupids shooting arrows in the air. A few strokes of the brush of this artist produced in a few moments an eye in the head of one of the cupids, which was distinguished by wonderful softness, and a depth of liquid sentiment that showed a fine combination of brains and brush power.

Mr. Douthitt has with rare skill discovered each artist's specialty, and he employs one to paint the heads of cupids, or figures, another to paint the bodies, another to paint the drapery, and still another to paint the backgrounds, or cloud effects, and in this way, by combining the best work of a number of artists, he can produce works of art that are unapproachable in their perfection.

We reproduce on the opposite page a copy of one of this gentleman's latest tapestry paintings. The subject is "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in which a female figure, partially swathed in flowing draperies, is reclining asleep in the crescent of the new moon, guarded by flying cupids. The subject is very attractive, and its reproduction by Mr. Douthitt is extremely beautiful.

The demand for these tapestries has of late advanced with rapid strides until, at present, it taxes the powers of The American Tapestry Co. to supply them.